

Shuler Theater actress fights cancer with comedy

By Tim Keller
Special to The Chronicle-News

RATON — Just before Christmas, First United Methodist Church pastor Adrienne Coleman was ringing the Salvation Army bell outside the El Raton Movie Theatre when Shuler Theater director Gail Dixon-Willden arrived for a movie. Coleman surprised herself when she offered, on a whim, “If you ever want a strong female lead, I’m your gal.”

Then she got a New Year’s present she didn’t want. On Jan. 2, she was diagnosed with breast cancer.

The next month, on Mardi Gras Fat Tuesday, she took the role of Vivian in the Kaleidoscope Players’ summer repertory musical comedy “Church Basement Ladies,” which opened at the Shuler Theater June 28 and continues through Aug. 4.

“This is a way to say ‘cancer is only a word,’” she says. “It’s a bad word, but it doesn’t have to stop you. Not only can you go on with your life, but you can also start something new. I’ve found the stage to be an effective adjunct to cancer treatments.”

She received chemotherapy in Pueblo for five months, from January to May. Her hair loss, she says, “makes it easier to wear the wig” of her stage character, Vivian.

She had a lumpectomy last Monday and faces five years of drug therapy.

“I’m proud to say that I haven’t missed a Sunday in the pulpit. That’s been part of my goal of pushing forward positively. You get so wrapped up in the medical side of the treatments. The theater side of my life has been a good countermeasure. The laughter and play



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Adrienne Coleman’s elder character Vivian, right, counsels Jillian Solano’s younger Karin in the musical comedy “Church Basement Ladies,” which continues at the Shuler Theater through Aug. 4.

have been invigorating and energizing therapy for me.”

Rehearsals ran nine hours a day, six days a week for several weeks. She over-

came joint pain, lack of energy, and the rigors of rehearsal to sing and dance and laugh in her first stage role since 1979.

After doing college theater in Denton, Texas, she married, moved to Farmington, N.M., and had four children who are now



ADRIANNE COLEMAN

33, 29, 21 and 16 years old. (The youngest, Nathan, will play the lead role of Willie Wonka in the Shuler’s children’s theater production Aug. 10-12.) She acted with the San Juan Stage Company and directed “Hello Dolly” and “Fiddler on the Roof.”

Then she got busy raising four kids and didn’t mount a stage for more than thirty years.

Well, not exactly. Along with fellow Raton pastor and stage actor Rick Trice, she says, “When people ask us how long it’s been since we were on the stage, we say, ‘Last Sunday.’”

“The biggest difference,” she says, “is that in church, the lights are on and you can see the audience.”

Most of her parishioners, both from the Raton congregation and Grace United Methodist Church in Des Moines — the two churches are “yoked” and share one pastor — have already come to see her in “Church Basement Ladies.” Coleman, who arrived in Raton in 2010, says, “My parishioners view my act-

ing as a good way for their pastor to be connected to the community.”

Although the play is an ensemble piece, Coleman’s character of Vivian is the one with the greatest challenge and change. “She’s the matriarch of the kitchen and probably a lifelong member of the church. She pulls the strings, but she’s feeling the rug pulled out from under her by the younger women.”

It’s a theme that resonates for Coleman. “I’ve been preaching for a couple years about our need to embrace change,” she says. “People defer to Vivian in the play, but they’re also trying to pull her forward into the changes represented by the present day.”

Coleman recently saw something posted on Facebook that has stuck with her: “It said that when something bad happens to you, there are three choices: you can let it define you, destroy you, or strengthen you.”

She’s responded to her cancer by returning to the stage, even with its daunting demands. Not only has she embraced change, but she’s used it to strengthen herself.

“Church Basement Ladies” continues at the Shuler Theater and tonight at 7:30 p.m. On July 27 and Aug. 4 there will be two shows each day, a 2:30 p.m. matinee followed by a 7:30 p.m. evening show.

General admission tickets are available at the door — \$15 adults, \$13 seniors, and \$5 children. Additional information is available at the Shuler Theater, (575) 445-4746.

Where to worship

A list of denominations and churches in the area



AREA WIDE

AGUILAR

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF AGUILAR (Outreach Church of First Christian Church of Trinidad)
309 S. Romero / 719-846-3843.
Sunday Bible School: 9 a.m. & Worship Service: 10 a.m.
J.E.T. Youth Group Services (1st & 3rd Sundays), 6 p.m., ages 12-20.
Websites: fcttrinidad.com and jet4christ.com. Pastor Scott Martin.

ST. ANTHONY’S CATHOLIC CHURCH - 125 South Fir.
Sunday Mass: 8:30 a.m.
Priest: Phil Coury, 719-941-4124.

INTERNATIONAL HOLINESS CHURCH - 609 Fir St.
Sunday Worship: 10 a.m.
Friday Bible Study: 7 p.m.

BRANSON

BRANSON COMMUNITY CHURCH
Sunday Worship: 10:30 a.m.
Sunday School: 9:30 a.m. (all ages)
Wednesday Youth Group: 6:30 p.m.
Pastor Brad Doherty, 719-946-5646.

COKE DALE

CHRIST IN THE CANYONS FELLOWSHIP
Cokedale Schoolhouse
Sunday Worship & Teaching: 10 a.m.-noon.
Mid-week gatherings, men & women’s small groups. Inter-denominational.
Pastor Ed Richardson, 719-846-9594.

SEGUNDO

ST. IGNATIUS
Saturday Mass: 5 p.m. (2nd & 4th Saturdays) 719-846-3369.

THE LORD’S CHAPEL
Highway 12 - West of Segundo
Sunday School: 10 a.m. & Sunday Church Service: 11 a.m.
“A Christian Church with a Caring Heart.”
719-846-8506 or 719-868-3044.
Pastor Aaron Norton

STONEWALL

STONEWALL COMMUNITY CHURCH
10 miles west of Weston on Highway 12
Sunday Service: 10 a.m.
Pastor Ross Gagliardi

VIGIL

SAN ISIDRO CHURCH
Saturday Mass: 5 p.m. (1st & 3rd Saturdays).

TRINIDAD

Adventist
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST
1605 Aiello St. 719-846-0244.
Sabbath School: Saturday, 9:30 - 11 a.m.
Sabbath Service: 11 a.m.
Pastor Robert Bird, 1-505-387-2131.
Elder Herb Sabol, 719-846-0699.

Apostolic

APOSTOLIC LIGHTHOUSE TABERNACLE
I-25, Exit 11, South of Wal-Mart.
Sunday School: 11:30 a.m.
Worship Service: 12:15 p.m.
Wednesday Worship: 7 p.m.
“Come Worship With Us.”
Pastor Charlie Gurule, 719-242-4774 or 505-301-8201.

Bible

TRINIDAD BIBLE CHURCH
1513 Hayes Street / 719-846-2885.
Sunday Family Worship, 10 a.m.
Parenting and personal Bible studies during the week.
Pastor Rick Thomas

SOUTHERN APOSTOLIC CHURCH OF JESUS - 816 Nevada
Sunday: 10 a.m. (English & Spanish)
LIFE Group meets Thursday at 7 p.m.
“One Lord, one faith, one baptism.”
Pastor David Boyer, 719-680-0986.

Assembly of God

FIRST ASSEMBLY OF GOD CHURCH - 924 North Nevada Ave.
Sunday School: 9:45 a.m.
Sunday Worship: 10:45 a.m. & 6 p.m.
Wednesday Services: 7 p.m.
Pastor Kim Pittman

TEMPLO BETHEL ASSEMBLY OF GOD - 218 Santa Fe Trail
Sunday Services: 10 a.m., Worship, 11:30 a.m., & Evangelistic Service, 6 p.m.
Mid-week Worship Service: 6 p.m.
Pastor Nick Trujillo

Baptist

BIBLE BAPTIST (Independent)
1102 Stonewall. Sunday School: 10 a.m., Sunday Worship: 11 a.m. & 6:30 p.m.
Thursday Worship: 7 p.m.
Call: 719-845-0827.

FISHER’S PEAK COMMUNITY CHURCH -10377 Santa Fe Trail.
Sunday Services: Bible Study, 9 a.m., Worship, 10:15 a.m., Senior High Youth, 5 p.m., Wednesday Bible Study, all ages, 6 p.m. - Nursery provided.
Pastor David Cook, 719-846-6018
Everyone is welcome!

Church of Christ

CHURCH OF CHRIST
1000 Nevada Ave. / 719-846-2919.
Sunday: Bible Class, 9:30 a.m., Worship 10:30 a.m. & 6 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Study: 7 p.m.

Catholic

HOLY TRINITY CATHOLIC CHURCH - 235 North Convent St.
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Christian

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH
200 S. Walnut St. / 719-846-3843.
Sunday Bible classes - all ages: 9:30 a.m.
Sunday Worship Service: 10:45 a.m. (Nursery provided, infant - 5 yrs. Also broadcast on KCRT, 1240 AM 11 a.m. - noon on Sunday.)
Wednesday Adult Bible Study & Youth Group: 7 p.m.
Free Men’s Breakfast: 8 a.m. every fourth Saturday - community is invited.
Websites: fcttrinidad.com & jet4christ.com. Pastor Cary Nelson.

POTTER’S HOUSE CHRISTIAN CENTER - 1601 Nevada Ave.
Sunday: 10:45 a.m. & 6 p.m.
Wednesday: 7 p.m.
Pastor Joseph Gutierrez, 719-859-1093.

CHURCH OF GOD - 220 S. Animas St.
Sunday Worship: 10 a.m.
Ministry of Gods Word: 11:15 a.m.
Thursday Prayer & Bible Study (in-home): 7:30 p.m.
Call 719-846-3781 or 719-846-4883 or go to: www.ChurchesofGod.info

Church of Christ

CHURCH OF CHRIST
1000 Nevada Ave. / 719-846-2919.
Sunday: Bible Class, 9:30 a.m., Worship 10:30 a.m. & 6 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Study: 7 p.m.

Inter-denominational

GOOD LIFE FELLOWSHIP
For those without a home Church, we are here. You are not alone. Offering: In-home Bible Study, Communion, Baptisms, Hospital Visits, Weddings, etc. Goodlifefellowship.com or 719-845-0567. “Meeting the needs of the community”

NEW HOPE MINISTRIES
38096 Highway 160 (Old Wagon Wheel)
Sunday Worship Services: 10:15 a.m.
Wednesday Prayer Meeting: 6 p.m.
2nd Sunday Praise Breakfast: 9 a.m.
Pastor Vondell Koontz
719-845-0078 or 719-846-3853

Jehovah’s Witness

KINGDOM HALL - 1713 Goodale St.
Sunday Public Talk: 10 a.m. & Watchtower Bible Study: 10:50 a.m.
Tuesday Bible Study: 7:30 p.m.
719-846-3119.

Lutheran

ZION’S LUTHERAN CHURCH
Corner of Prospect & Pine Streets.
Sunday Worship: 10 a.m. (Holy Communion 1st & 3rd Sundays).
Pastor Andrea Doeden, 719-846-7785.

Methodist

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH - 216 Broom Street.
Fall: Sunday after Labor Day to Memorial Day / Adult Bible Study & Choir Rehearsal: 9:45-10:45 a.m., Worship & Children’s Sunday School: 11 a.m.
Summer: Sunday after Memorial Day to Labor Day / Worship: 9 a.m.
Pastor Bobby Barnhill, 719-393-3566.

Nazarene

1st CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE
733 Stonewall Ave. / 719-845-0383.
Sunday School: 9:30 a.m.
Sunday Worship: 10:45 a.m.
Wednesday (for all ages): 6:30 p.m.
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Pastor Rick Davis

Non-denominational

FAITH CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
2608 Santa Fe Trail.
Sunday Service: 10 a.m.
Mid-week Service: Tuesday, 6 p.m.
Youth Service: Thursday, 6 p.m. (Nursery & Children’s Classes provided.)
Pastor Bill Frashuer, 719-846-9673.

HEART OF TRINIDAD FELLOWSHIP - 131 W. Main St.
Sunday Celebration: 10 a.m.
Pastor Dick Valdez, 719-846-9100.

Trans-denominational

HIDDEN TREASURE MINISTRIES
208 Pine St. / 719-742-5766.
Monday: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Call for pastoral care or personal ministry.
Pastors John & Sherron Hudson

Pentecostal

FIRST PENTECOSTAL CHURCH
10375 Santa Fe Trail / 719-846-2987.
Sunday Worship: 10 a.m. & 6 p.m., Thursday Service: 7:30 p.m.
Pastor Sean Gonzales

Presbyterian

UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
801 San Pedro - All are welcome!
Winter: Sunday Service is 10:30 a.m. & Sunday School is 9:30 a.m.
Summer: Sunday Service is 9:30 a.m. - from Memorial Day to Labor Day & no Sunday School during the summer.
Pastor Bonnie Canizaro 719-846-6513.

Synagogues

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